

The Farm Stand by PaperBodies

Series: [Harringrove April Challenge \[5\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Billy Hargrove lives obviously, Fluff, Getting Together, M/M, Post S3, Pre-Relationship, just a cute lil farm trip, kind of?

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Characters: Billy Hargrove, Heather Holloway, Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington, Robin Buckley/Heather Holloway

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Summary:

“Have you ever been here before?” Heather asked, falling into step beside him. Billy shook his head.

“It’s nice this time of year,” she said, “although this is the first time I’ve been in years. We came out here every year during elementary school for apple picking, so I was pretty over it after that. But they have all kinds of animals, and beehives, and they do tours of the orchards and stuff.” Billy hummed in response. He didn’t care all that much about fresh produce or farm animals, but he did care about how excited Steve was to be here. He watched as Steve made his way through the produce stand, asking enthusiastic questions and seemingly buying a little bit of everything.

The Farm Stand

It was Steve's idea. Billy could have said no, obviously. He was a grown-ass adult, and now that he had his own apartment and a hefty government stipend and never had to see Neil again, he generally did what he wanted. But it was Steve's idea, so he said yes. He complained a lot about it, but he also got up at the ass-crack of dawn and pulled up in front of Steve and Robin's apartment half an hour before he had to. He knocked on the door. When Robin opened it, he held up the tray of coffees in his other hand.

"Oh thank God," she said. "Steve can never figure out that stupid fancy coffee maker until he's had at least one cup of coffee." Billy raised an eyebrow. "Yeah, it's a real catch-22," Robin said, eagerly taking the coffee he handed her. Billy followed her to the kitchen, where Steve had just resorted to banging his forehead against the cabinets above the coffee maker. Billy crossed the room, tentatively grabbed the back of Steve's t-shirt and pulled him away from the cabinets, and handed him the hazelnut-flavored abomination he always ordered. Steve stared at it for a long moment, and then took it, raised it to his face, and inhaled deeply.

"I love you so much," he breathed out, eyes closed, and Billy *knew* he was talking to his dumb coffee, but it still sent a little thrill through him. Apparently it was enough for him just to be in Steve's general vicinity when he said it. God, he was pathetic.

"Are you actually going to be ready to leave in half an hour, dingus?" Robin's voice was skeptical. Steve swallowed the huge sip of coffee he had just taken and looked at the clock on the stove with wide eyes.

"Half an hour?" he asked, alarm in his voice. Robin stared at him.

"*You* were the one who said that we absolutely had to leave by six thirty. 'Otherwise we'll miss all the good produce, Robin,' you said with your stupid huge Bambi eyes. I swear to God, if you're not ready to leave at precisely six thirty, I will—" Steve didn't wait to hear the rest of the threat. He took his coffee and vanished down the hallway toward the bathroom.

Heather knocked on the door fifteen minutes later, far too energetic for how early it was. Billy leaned on the counter, sipping his coffee and watching Robin and Heather shoot little smiles at each other until Steve reappeared at six twenty-five. He had on one of his dumb vests, and his hair was only partially tamed, and Billy wanted to call off the whole trip and steer him straight into his bedroom, and into his bed. But the trip was Steve's idea and Billy was probably never actually going to follow through on his feelings, so he got into the passenger seat of Steve's car instead.

The ninety-minute drive was surprisingly bearable. Steve had chosen music that did not completely offend Billy's sensibilities, and Robin and Heather mostly kept their hands to themselves in the backseat. Conversation flowed easily, and Billy wondered once again how exactly he had ended up as a part of this little friend group.

Shared trauma creates bonds, he could hear his therapist saying, but was it really shared trauma when he had been the source of it for everybody else? He tried to shut down that particular line of thinking, and was grateful a few minutes later when Steve pulled him back into the conversation. The four of them were in the middle of a spirited discussion about where they were getting lunch after this (Billy and Heather were voting for pizza, while Steve and Robin were dead-set on burgers—they were absolutely going to end up getting burgers, but it was still fun to argue about it) when the car slowed and Billy was surprised to see a faded wooden sign announcing that they had arrived at The Farm Stand.

Steve pulled into a parking space and got out, stretching out after the drive. He glanced around the parking lot and nodded approvingly at how empty it was.

"I'm telling you," he said, "this place is going to be jam-packed in half an hour. Good luck getting any morels or peaches then." Robin shook her head as she climbed out of the backseat.

"It's way too early in the year for peaches, dingus. I can't believe you made me get up this early for out-of-season produce."

"Just you wait," Steve said. "I'm going to make a peach-rhubarb cobbler that is going to blow your mind." Billy followed them toward

the produce stand, taking in the expanse of fields beyond it.

“Have you ever been here before?” Heather asked, falling into step beside him. Billy shook his head.

“It’s nice this time of year,” she said, “although this is the first time I’ve been in years. We came out here every year during elementary school for apple picking, so I was pretty over it after that. But they have all kinds of animals, and beehives, and they do tours of the orchards and stuff.” Billy hummed in response. He didn’t care all that much about fresh produce or farm animals, but he did care about how excited Steve was to be here. He watched as Steve made his way through the produce stand, asking enthusiastic questions and seemingly buying a little bit of everything. Eventually, Steve was satisfied, though he kept tossing longing glances back at the few things he hadn’t purchased. With some difficulty, Robin persuaded him to leave his haul in the trunk of the car while they walked around the rest of the property.

“It’s not even supposed to get all that warm today, Steven. Everything’s going to be fine. Put your stuff away so we can go look at the horses.” After a final, token protest Steve did, and they wandered over to the paddock. There was a miniature donkey in with the horses, and both Robin and Heather cooed over it. They wandered around for a while, until Robin and Heather decided to go on an orchard tour, and Steve wanted to visit the beehives and sample some honey. Billy followed Steve because that was just what he did now, apparently. Besides, Robin and Heather were almost surely going to spend the whole tour finding places where they could sneak off and make out, and Billy didn’t want to cramp their style.

Steve was apparently just as passionate about honey as he was about produce, and Billy wandered off in the middle of his enthusiastic discussion with an equally passionate beekeeper about the different types of honey available for purchase. He eventually stopped in front of a large enclosure, which housed several miniature goats. There was a pair of baby goats running around with the others and as he watched them play-fight, Billy felt a familiar prickling behind his eyelids.

Come on, he thought to himself, *not here*. Because this was a thing

that he did now. Crying about stupid shit. About nothing. He hated it.

Not about nothing, he heard his therapist say, voice calm and measured. *It's a kind of displacement. You refuse to grieve for yourself, for the things you've lost or never had, so those emotions find another outlet.* Billy didn't care what she called it—it was still dumb. Pathetic, even. And now here he was, crying actual tears over baby goats, of all things, right out in the open, where anyone could see him. Where Steve could see him. He sniffled a little and wiped a careless hand over his eyes, hoping he would be done before Steve reappeared. So of course Steve chose that moment to seek him out, as if summoned.

“Hey, check it out, they had—are you ok?” Steve’s voice was all concern, and it only made Billy’s eyes well up even more. “What’s wrong, B?” Steve asked gently. Billy didn’t know what to say, so he didn’t say anything. Steve, of course, kept talking. “Do you hate it here? I was worried you would hate it. We can go if you want to. I can find Robin and Heather...” Steve looked around, as though he was going to go get them right now, and Billy’s desire to reassure him won out over his dignity.

“Nothing’s wrong,” he said, voice choked with unshed tears. “I don’t hate it here. I just...do this sometimes now.”

“Yeah?” Steve asked carefully. Billy shrugged and gestured helplessly at the baby goats.

“They’re just so *small*,” he said, and then he was crying harder.

“Come here,” Steve said, and then he was setting down his bag of honey and his hands were on Billy’s shoulders and he was pulling him in for a hug, which wasn’t—they didn’t do that. Billy had been all over Steve Harrington in high school, constantly in his space, but things had changed. Now, after everything, he did his best to maintain a careful distance from Steve, largely because he no longer trusted himself to *stop* touching Steve if he ever really got started. It had only taken a week or two of Billy tensing up at Steve’s touch and Steve looking faintly wounded every time for Steve to start keeping his distance as well.

But now here they were, Steve’s arms solid and warm around Billy,

and Billy's arms instinctively coming up around Steve's waist. Billy froze, expecting Steve to pull away fairly quickly, but he didn't. He held on until Billy felt himself actually relaxing into the hug, melting against Steve and tucking his face into Steve's shoulder. Billy figured he could let himself have this, just for a minute. Tears still slipped down his face, dampening a spot on Steve's shirt.

"That's the cutest thing I've ever seen," Steve murmured into his ear.

"The baby goats?" Billy mumbled. "*I know.*" Steve pulled back far enough to look Billy in the eye, and smiled.

"No, dumbass," Steve said, voice full of affection. His eyes were wide and warm and he brought a hand up to brush away some of Billy's tears. "*You* crying about baby goats."

Author's Note:

Days 10-11: peaches, hug

I don't know, man. This is fine, but if I stared at it any longer I was going to delete it, so I published it instead.

Unbeta'd, like all of these, because I'm not exactly writing them in advance.